

Getting Started with Your Individual Learning Plan.

The Department has adapted the Office of Personnel Management's basic competency framework to support employee development. The formal definitions of each competency are in the Appendix, but the word or phrases describing each competency are basically self-explanatory. The first set of competencies is universal or foundational competencies. These competencies are continually developed and evolving as you progress in your career. The universal competencies can be divided into three groups:

1. Personal qualities – flexibility, motivation to serve the public interest, integrity and honesty, personal accountability for actions, resilience in facing difficulties, stress management, and interest in continual learning.
2. Working with people – interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence (knowing your strengths and weaknesses and appreciating other individuals' capabilities), and conflict management.
3. Task accomplishment – oral communication, written communication, presentation and briefing skills, general computer literacy, specific desktop computer applications, using e-mail effectively, and problem solving.

These competencies are interdependent: interpersonal skills, oral communication, emotional intelligence, and integrity and honesty all contribute to working with other people and problem solving in team situations. We also have grouped them because often training or work assignments involve more than one of these competencies. Conflict management training might also involve interpersonal skills and stress management.

We need to start by setting some priorities or personal direction.

1. How important is a specific competency to me in the workplace or for my career?

- Is there a particular incident or situation in the past 12 months where I could have made better use of this competency or where I needed some support? Yes or No.

- Do I think it would be good to work on this capacity to better overcome certain situations or circumstances in the next 12 months? Yes or No. In the next two or three years? Yes or No.

- Would your supervisor, best co-worker, or good friend agree with you? Yes or No.

Universal Competency [Universal Definitions]	Past year?	Upcoming year?	In 2-3 years?	Others agree?
Universal Competencies - Personal Characteristics or Values				
Flexibility				
Resilience				
Public interest motivation				
Integrity and honesty				
Personal accountability				
Dealing with stress				
Continuous learning				
Universal Competencies - Working With People				
Interpersonal skills				
Emotional intelligence				
Conflict management				
Universal Competencies - Task Accomplishment				
Oral communication				
Written communication				
Formal speaking/briefing skills				
Computer literacy				
DOE desktop software applications				
E-mail effectiveness				
Problem solving				
What are your three top priorities? Why?				
1	2	3		

The second set of major competencies involves leadership. Everyone exercises leadership in a strong organization. We start with universal characteristics like accountability, flexibility, and problem solving and develop additional leadership capacities as we act more independently and then become a team member, project manager, team leader, supervisor, manager, or executive. We all also have strengths and weaknesses. In some cases, we have never had the opportunity or need to develop a specific competency; that does not mean that we cannot develop it to meet a new challenge.

Again, we need to set priorities using the same question as before. These competencies fall into four groups.

1. How important is a specific competency to me in the workplace or for my career?

- Is there a particular incident or situation in the past 12 months where I could have made better use of this competency or where I needed some support? Yes or No.

- Do I think it would be good to work on this capacity to better overcome certain situations or circumstances in the next 12 months? Yes or No.

In the next two or three years? Yes or No.

- Would your supervisor, best co-worker, or good friend agree with you? Yes or No.

Leadership Competency [Leadership Definitions]	Past year?	Upcoming year?	In 2-3 years?	Others agree?
Leading People				
Developing others				
Leveraging diversity				
Team building				
Driving for Results				
Executing strategy				
Decisiveness				
Entrepreneurship				

Leading Change				
Creativity and Innovation				
External Awareness				
Vision				
Strategic Thinking				
Building Coalitions				
Influencing / Negotiating				
Partnering				
Political Savvy				

What are your three top priorities? Why?

1	2	3

The final groups of competencies are more complex and you are going to have to provide the technical competencies needed for your current position and the next steps in your career. In addition to the Mission Critical or technical competencies you need, you may also need business management or work process competencies. In as much as the Mission Critical and business management competencies often interact, a column is provided on the left side for your Mission Critical competencies so you can make a judgment on how they interact.

Where do you find the mission critical competencies? You can review the actual work you have done over the past year, you can ask colleagues or your supervisor, and you can review competencies developed by your organization. In some cases, your mission critical competencies may just be a more detailed listing of competencies needed for one of the business management competencies on the right hand side. For example, a budget analyst in the CFO's shop will check Budget management and perhaps Program management and would list a set of competencies for Budget and Program management on the left hand side.

Mission/Technical Competencies [You provide.]	Past or next year?	Interacts with? [1, 1]	Past or next year?	Business Management Competencies [Business Definitions]
1.				1.Financial management
2.				2.Acquisition management
3.				3.IT management
4.				4.Budget management
5.				5.Business Process management
6.				6.Measuring Performance
7.				7.Program management
8.				8.Safety Management
9.				9.Human Capital management
10.				10.Technology management
11.				11.Project management
12.				
13.				
14.				

What are your three top priorities? Why?

1	2	3

Establishing Your Target Goals. You have to take charge of your own future. You have to establish competency-framed goals that meet your career learning plan and your DOE individual development plan. We are separating your career goals from your organization's goals for you. They may overlap and be harmonious. They may not. The degree to which your career goals and your IDP goals overlap may be a simple measure of how comfortably you fit in your current organization and if you might need to think about looking for a new job. You need to be engaged fully in your work to be successful; your team, your supervisor, your organization need to support you, to engage in your future. Pleasant communication is not enough; positive, shared support toward compatible goals results in mutual success.

You have selected nine target competencies. Now you have to select one to two competency development goals for this year and one to two goals for a period two to five years in the future. Then you have to determine which goals the Department will support financially because improvements in those competencies will have a payoff for your organization's mission.

Priority	First Goals - List	Priority CLP Goals – Select Your Targets	Priority IDP Goals- Select Work Target
Universal Competency Target Goals			
1			
2			
3			
Leadership Competency Target Goals			
1			
2			
3			
Mission Critical and Business Management Competency Target Goals			
1			
2			
3			

You have to set your own priorities and be prepared to explain why certain goals are more important than others. You need to think as you make your selections that the original set of priorities and time frames will change as you select competency development target goals. You are now engaged in strategic planning for your own career future. One of the oldest rules in strategic planning is that selection of one option can change the relative values of the other options. You may want to become a senior contract official or a science project manager; you may end up selecting short and long term target competency development goals compatible with that career position and not pursuing other targets that might be more interesting right now.

This is a lesson in leadership. You are developing a vision of your future using problem-solving and strategic planning to get set your objectives. Now, you are going to have to use influencing / negotiating skills and political savvy to have the Department be a co-partner in executing your learning and development strategy.

Allocating Work Hours, Training Funds, and Travel Funds: The Investment. Training is an investment. You may pay for it, your office may pay for it, or you might share the costs. The costs are much more than just the dollars spent for training or education and travel. The costs also include your time, your supervisor's time, your co-workers' time if they are stepping in for you, and your customers' time in terms of level of services provided. Your supervisor is balancing all these factors against performance improvement and retention and recognition factors, not only for you, but for all the work unit staff. As you discuss your IDP with your supervisor and as you enter your request through the Employee Self-Service CHRIS Training Workflow connection

(<http://mis.doe.gov/ess/>), you need to understand you are looking for a return on the investment of your personal time and your organization is looking for a return on investment of its staff time and dollars.

Where you can find excellent learning and development opportunities. Appendix B is a guide to learning and development resources available to you both inside and outside the Department. The key is to focus on your Career Learning Plan and your Individual Development Plan goals. In looking at the enormous number of opportunities available, remember that these resources were developed to meet the needs of the 15,000 Departmental employees, not just you. Stay on track; maintain your focus; select the path that leads to your goals.

Appendix – DOE Universal, Leadership, and Business Management Competencies

The universal and leadership competencies can be grouped into five categories or factors: Leading People (P), Leading Change (C), Driving for Results(R), Building Coalitions and Partnerships (P) , and Business Tools, Processes, and Management (B). The column on the far left names the category for each competency.

The mastery of these different competencies depends on your work responsibilities and the mission critical competencies needed in your program area. These categories are more fluid and in the far right column we have provided a range that indicates when these competencies become positive contributors to performance to when they need to be mastered: All employees (L1), Team leaders and project managers (L2), Supervisors (L3), Managers (L4), and Executives (L5). Your job and your career learning plan are going to be different and you may need to build a higher level of mastery of certain competencies than the average. These ranges can only serve as a rough guide. Don't be afraid to be above average.

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Factor		DOE Competency Framework	Level
	Name	Definition	
	Universal Competencies - Personal Characteristics or Values		
C	Flexibility	Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution.	L1-->
P	Public Service Motivation	Creates and sustains an organizational culture which permits others to provide the quality of service essential to high performance.	L1-->
P	Integrity and Honesty	Instills mutual trust and confidence; creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics: behaves in a fair and ethical manner toward others, and demonstrates a sense of corporate responsibility and commitment to public service.	L1-->
R	Accountability	Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans, focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.	L1-->
C	Resilience	Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Effectively balances personal life and work.	L1-->
R	Stress Management	Functions effectively when under pressure and maintains self-control in the face of adversity, hostility or provocation.	L1-->
C	Continual Learning	Grasps the essence of new information, masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.	L1-->
	Universal Competencies - Working With People		

P	Interpersonal Skills	Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.	L1-->
R	Emotional Intelligence	Demonstrates self knowledge of strengths and limits, self management in performing and interacting in the workplace, social awareness in understanding the feelings and needs of others, and relationship skills in working with others.	L1-->
P	Conflict Management	Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact.	L1-->
Universal Competencies - Task Accomplishment			
R	Problem Solving	Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organization problems.	L1-->
P	Oral Communication	Makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups, listens effectively.	L1-->
P	Written Communications	Expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing, and organized manner.	L1-->
P	Presentation and Briefing Skills	Develop and can make clear, succinct, and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups. Fosters open exchange of ideas.	L1-->
B	Computer Literacy	Use computers and related information management and production technologies efficiently to meet organizational needs and integrates new hardware, software applications, and related technologies into current processes and outputs to meet organizational needs.	L1-->
B	Desktop Software Applications	Use standard, DOE provided, computer applications to meet work requirements and updates capabilities as needed. (Examples are Microsoft Word, Outlook, Access, Excel, and Power Point.)	L1-->
B	Using E-Mail Effectively	Exercise proper e-mail etiquette to maximize personal effectiveness in using e-mail as a means of communication.	L1-->
DOE Leadership Competencies			
Back	Leading People		
P	Developing Others	Provides feedback and opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.	L2-L3
P	Leveraging Diversity	Recruits, develops, and retains a diverse, inclusive, high quality workforce in an equitable manner.	L2-L3
P	Team Building	Inspires team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and leadership development.	L2-L3
Driving for Results			
R	Executing Strategy	Translates strategy into action through effective design, implementation, and assessment.	L2-L3
R	Decisiveness	Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited.	L3-L4
R	Entrepreneurship	Identifies opportunities to develop new products and services; takes risks to achieve outcomes.	L3-L4

R	Mission/Technical Credibility	Applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, policies related to mission expertise.	L1-L3
	Leading Change		
C	Creativity and Innovation	Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make improvements.	L3-L4
C	External Awareness	Identifies and keeps up-to-date on key external policies and trends that affect the organization.	L3-L4
C	Strategic Thinking	Determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.	L3-L5
C	Vision	Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for change.	L4-L5
	Building Coalitions		
P	Influencing/Negotiating	Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others.	L2-L5
P	Partnering	Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.	L2-L5
P	Political Savvy	Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization.	L3-L5
	Back	Business Tools, Processes, and Management	
T	Financial Management	Understands and has expertise necessary to ensure appropriate funding levels, prepare, justify, and/or administer budgets, use cost-benefit thinking to set priorities; and monitor expenditures.	L3-L4
T	Acquisition Management	Understands and applies principles of acquisition management by applying law, regulation, policy, and business processes in purchasing goods and services economically.	L2-L4
T	IT Management	Understands and uses information management and telecommunications hardware and software to support performance needs.	L3-L4
T	Budget Management	Understand and applies Federal government budget cycle requirements to plan and obtain funds and execute and assess monies authorized.	L2-L4
T	Business Process Man/Reengineering	Understands and applies the theory and practice of strategies, tools, and methods to design (and improve), implement, and assess the performance of processes through which work is achieved.	L2-L4
T	Measuring Program/Project Performance	Understands and applies strategies and techniques for assessing an organization's performance results as part of the strategic planning and budgeting process, linking the mission, vision, goals, and outcomes.	L2-L4
T	Program Management	Integrates project, human capital, and overall financial management requirements to define and meet program objectives.	L3-L4
T	Project Management	Understands and applies project management principles from business case to developing a project plan and strategy to managing project implementation throughout its lifecycle.	L2-L4
T	Safety Management	Develops, maintains, and improves an organization's capabilities to identify and control risks to health and safety and meet legal demands.	L2-L3

T	Human Capital Management	Assesses current and future staffing needs and ensures staff are appropriately selected, developed, utilized, appraised, and rewarded, including corrective action to address performance problems.	L3
T	Technology Management	Uses cost effective approaches to integrate technology into the workplace and improve program effectiveness. Develops strategies using new technology to enhance decision making and results.	L3